

SUKI

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JAPAN FOUNDATION



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COVER STORY

The Japan Foundation, Manila presented a theater production Manila Notes in partnership with Tanghalang Pilipino and the Cultural Center of the Philippines from November 30 to December 16, 2018. The play is the adaptation of Tokyo Notes written by renowned director and playwright Oriza Hirata. To make sure that the Japanese material communicate well with the local audience, the Palanca Hall of Fame writer Rody Vera worked with Hirata on the adaptation. He shares his experience in this issue of SUKI.



Rody Vera (standing) during the gala night's talkback session

A Quiet Drama

By Rody Vera

It was in 2016, if I recall correctly, when Tanghalang Pilipino, by way of then Associate Artistic Director Liesl Batucan, contacted me and asked me if I would be interested to adapt a play by Oriza Hirata, *Tokyo Notes*. I have not heard nor read nor seen this play, which I later realized has been performed many times in various countries such as Japan, Thailand, Taiwan, South Korea, France, and the United States.

Liesl Batucan told me that Tanghalang Pilipino is set to produce the adapted play in 2018, to be sponsored by and in partnership with the Japan Foundation Manila Office. She submitted my name as one of the possible playwrights who would be chosen by Mr. Hirata to adapt the play. It was to follow the same adaptation process as had been done in several Asian cities (Seoul, Taipei, and Bangkok), which was

that the setting will be located in Manila, hence the title *Manila Notes*.

There was a bit of reluctance on my part at first. I felt I needed to know more about the play before I agree. She sent me a video copy of *Seoul Notes*. She also told me that the style of the play is called “quiet theater”- for lack of a better label. She described the play as a performance that had no music, no scoring, just talking, people sitting, hardly moving, not much of physical exertion for the actors, and the inner feelings of the characters are rarely articulated, if at all. As I listened, without having seen any example of what has been described to me, I imagined a subtler version of Chekhov, perhaps? Or probably the equivalent of “slow” cinema with the likes of Yasujiro Ozu, Tarkovsky, or our own Lav Diaz?

The resemblance of the play to the filmmakers’ style made more sense when I learned that Oriza Hirata was inspired by Ozu’s film, *Tokyo Story* (*Tokyo Monogatari*), about a woman who chooses to take care of her father instead of marrying. As I embarked on reading the play (in English), I was at first sight, struck by the layout format of the script. It was divided into two columns and was numbered in several units or chunks of scenes. There were no formal scene divisions because the whole action of the play happens in one continuous time and space. It’s one long act with 20 characters coming in and out of the acting area, which is the lobby of an art museum. Immediately I imagined this play that should probably run for a little less than two hours will have no intermission.

As I read the play the first time, I found it difficult to visualize the juxtapositions of characters with their lines overlapping many times. It was almost like reading a musical score with small symbols that would indicate when and where a line should begin or end. The script was written as some form of ‘theater symphony,’ if I should coin a term. The characters rarely show outright emotion and there are practically no dramatic confrontations. Yet, even at first reading, one can sense a somber quality not just in the tone of the whole play, but also in many of the characters demeanor, the majority of which remain unarticulated, unspoken. The play never explodes, but one can feel the painful ruptures in many instances, that, if brushed aside unnoticed, will not create the impact it potentially brings. On the page, I realize I needed to figure out exactly the meaning of what was

NOT being said. And this, for me what brought me to say yes to doing the adaptation.

The first thing I did was to visit museums. The quietness of the play, even as implied in the printed script, does not correspond to any Manila art gallery or museum. Many of Manila’s museums are flooded with students, boisterous and in huge groups on field trips, or local and foreign tourists constantly taking selfies in front of works of art. Probably the quietest art museum I entered was the Metropolitan Museum of Manila. It wasn’t a huge museum, and it suffices my own imagined space. I told myself, this is where *Manila Notes* would best be set in.

Not that it mattered much, but I needed a peg on which to allow the Pinoy characters to come to life. The play being set in 2034, and yet does not in any way push for a sci-fi or dystopian world but simply establishes a fictitious war going on in Europe, nevertheless adhered to a realist logic. The more important events in the play, if one could call them “events”, remained to be the trajectories of the characters themselves.

The next thing I needed to do was to create Filipino characters in place of the Japanese. The Akiyama Family became the Tenorio Family and so on and so forth. The Japan Foundation then asked Ms. Mayumi Chinda, who is rather fluent in Filipino, to translate *Tokyo Notes* from Nihongo directly to Filipino. With this on hand, as well as the English translation, I began adapting the play. I encountered several minor snags, most of them challenges in finding the closest equivalents to Pinoy culture and lingo. From the tone of the characters’ voices, I figured how they would sound in a Filipino setting. Dictions of specific characters may vary from academic (Jerome Henares and Emily Gorospe, art curators), to legal (Atty. Ross Miranda) or colloquial registers (Manny Araos as opposed to Bart dela Torre).



COVER STORY

And yet, even after finishing the draft of the adapted playscript, I was still unable to imagine how it will appear on stage. It was during the audition process, of which I participated as panel, that it became a lot clearer to me how this is going to play out. Mr. Hirata gave a few background notes to the actors. Sitting beside him, I could sense he was looking for the actors' capacity for subtlety, almost non-acting, and yet focused on the present moment. At first I found the blocking a bit odd as three benches lined up in rows, presented actors in side view of the audience sitting in front. Eventually I realized even this was intended.

In a few of the rehearsals I attended, it became much clearer how the atmosphere and rhythm of the play was determined by calculated pauses (ellipses on the script were carefully timed gaps!). What looked like a score on the printed page turned out to be indeed a set of instructions on how actors would set the rhythm, and on account of the rhythm set the mood of the whole production.

At first dress tech rehearsal, I could see that even at open house (30 minutes before show starts), the play has already begun, mostly in silence and small, insignificant banter. What marred the whole intent of this concept was CCP's inflexible regulation of sounding the chimes minutes before official



time of the show, and the playing of the national anthem. Nothing could be done about this, however, and Mr. Hirata seemed unperturbed. He later said it's the same regulation in Bangkok and they just let it happen.

The play began to grow on me. And I think even the actors had the same feeling. From being quite confused as to how to approach this piece, as we are mostly used to conventional dramatic techniques and devices (mostly bordering on confrontational to hysterical!)—the ensemble was guided by a strict method of restraint and subtlety. Of showing or even hinting at the turmoil happening inside each of the characters, behind a veneer of smiles, laughter and silence. It was a deep personal insight for me as a playwright. And for that I have Mr. Oriza Hirata to thank for opening a door of immense possibilities of showing theatre, without necessarily the histrionics. A quiet drama that is far more piercing and incisive than thunderous spectacle.

THE PLAYWRIGHT OF THE ADAPTATION

Rody Vera is also an actor and a singer, though he is known more as a writer in theater, film, and TV.

Rody has written more than 20 original plays, and has adapted and translated various plays into Filipino. His plays won Carlos Palanca Memorial awards. Titles include: *Kung "Paano Ko Pinatay si Diana Ross"* (2nd prize) and *"Paglalakbay ni Radya Mangandiri – Isang Pilipinong Ramayana,"* *"Balangiga"* (2nd prize), *"Luna: Isang Romansang Aswang"* (1st prize), and *"Dreamweavers"* (2nd prize). He has also written a few plays that were performed by Pintig Cultural Group, a Fil-American theater group based in Chicago: *"Sky Legend"* (3rd prize), and a musical, *"The Bells of Balangiga."* *"Senyor Paciano"* is his film script. It won the 2nd prize in the National Centennial Literary Awards in 1996. He was awarded the Bellagio Study Grant by the Rockefeller Foundation. Some years back, PETA staged *"Balete,"* his adaptation of another Sionil novel, *"Tree."*

CONTRIBUTOR'S CORNER

The Japan Foundation Asia Center Fellowship Program invites individuals who plan to pursue their research and activities outside their home country and further develop their field of expertise and form networks in ASEAN and/or Japan. Criselda Yabes was one of the recipients of last year's Fellowship Program where she spent 2 months in Kyoto to research on Japanese novelist and literary critic, Ooka Shohei.

OOKA SHOHEI: ON WARS AND WRITINGS

by Criselda Yabes

Ooka Shohei is in the reading list for Japanese scholars studying the Philippines, but the writer who wrote extensively about the World War II in the Philippines is hardly known in the country. He was a literary critic when he was drafted towards the end of the war, in mid-1944. Six months later he was captured by the Americans on the island of Mindoro and then sent to Leyte – which would be the subject of his works, both fiction and non-fiction.

He studied French literature in Kyoto University, leaving Tokyo where he was born and raised in a fairly affluent family, and anchored himself on Stendhal whose influence was seen in his 500-page *Journal d'un Prisonnier de Guerre*.

Ooka belonged to an infantry unit that was mostly made up of reservists. The company lost three-fourths of its men. He suffered from malaria, and it was partly due to that that he was captured – which was better than surrendering, a disgrace for a Japanese soldier. He tried to kill himself with his rifle but lost his balance. He had caught sight of a young American soldier but he didn't shoot, because since "I'm going to die anyway, I won't kill." He moved away, saw a river and drifted off to sleep. And that was how he was caught.

His journal isn't a typical story of bravado and heroism; in prison he thought he would be killed, little realizing that he would develop rare friendships with his American captors. That he spoke English made him an important prisoner. They had full meals of 2,700 calories per day – a fact that Ooka often repeated in his narration – and they also earned about three dollars per month. There were 700 officers and men – who were among the

last survivors of 135,000 troops Japan deployed to defend Leyte.

He wanted to write his great novel but couldn't. What he wrote were plays he rented out to the other prisoners for entertainment. But it was from his experience that he was able to get the plot, later after the war, for his cult novel *Fires On the Plain*, to be adapted into a black-and-white film in 1959. The protagonist was detached from the cruelties of the war and yet ultimately showed cannibalism.

The one common thing that stood out in his works was his description of the tropical Philippine countryside. He had little contact with Filipinos except for the tribe in Mindoro whom he said were indifferent about the war. In the novel, the brief character of a Filipino woman killed in a state of panic – an act the author seemed to have avenged when a Filipino woman in an American convoy opened fire at Japanese soldiers who were about to surrender.

Ooka was repatriated to Japan more than a year later, in December 1945 – about half a year after the bombs fell in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. His works showed that not only was he a writer, he was a soldier too.



Criselda Yabes was a recipient of The Japan Foundation Asia Center Fellowship Program in late 2018. She has written books mostly about Mindanao. She is currently researching on the 2017 battle of Marawi – with the fellowship in Kyoto having contributed to ideas and style for the project.

1SA:

SOLO ARTS PLATFORM

October 20 - 28, 2018

*Pineapple Lab and Powermac Center Spotlight,
Makati City*

by Andrei Pamintuan



Takao Kawaguchi takes a bow after performing *About Kazuo Ohno-Reliving the Butoh Diva's Masterpieces*



Andrei Pamintuan during the talkback session

1SA: Solo Arts Platform in Manila premiered in Makati City, Philippines in October during the country's Museums and Galleries Month. A literal first of its kind in Metro Manila, the platform celebrated solo artists, featuring solo performances at Pineapple Lab and Powermac Center Spotlight. 1SA, a play on the Filipino (Tagalog) word "*isa*" meaning "one," served as an avenue to explore various mediums of artistic expression and the complexities of creating or staging solo and original works. The festival was designed to highlight different genres of performing and performative arts through the presentation of solo performances and works. It also highlighted the hyphenated identities and cultures of the featured artists from Japan and the Philippines.

A pilot festival by Fringe Manila, which produce the annual Fringe Festival, 1SA was led by festival director Andrei Nikolai Pamintuan, an alumni of Japan Foundation Asia Center's Next Generation Producing Performing Arts Program from 2017 to 2018. The inspiration behind the festival was to be able to apply the learnings and ideas that Mr. Pamintuan learned as part of the year-long producers' program which spanned 3 countries, 4 cities, and 2 international festivals as well as TPAM – Yokohama.

1SA witnessed 3 world premieres in the forms of a performance memoir with Gabe Mercado's *Raising Gabe*, a one-woman musical theater piece with Gabbi Campomanes' satirical *My Night with Lea Salonga*, and the work-in-progress

piece *Brown Madonna* by Daloy Dance Company's Ea Torrado. The festival also exhibited moving images by Filipino-Canadian Mark Valino which showcased short dance videos filmed in Poblacion starring a diverse line-up of Filipino contemporary dancers. Along with the moving image exhibit was Herminio Tan's *Mitolohiya* sculptural exhibit, whose pieces straddled the macabre and whimsical traditions of Philippine myths and legends. The platform also produced re-stagings of two local and critically-acclaimed productions – the Green Glass Door's Fringe 2015 entry *Dance Until You Shatter Yourself* performed by Daniel Darwin and Dulaang UP's staging of Eimear McBride's *ang dalagita'y 'sang bagay na 'di buo* that starred prolific actress Skyzx Labastilla who has bagged numerous awards and citations for her performance. The 1SA line-up was completed by Japan's Takao Kawaguchi's controversial *About Kazuo Ohno – Reliving the Butoh Diva's Masterpieces*. This particular piece highlighted the internally expressive butoh and the seeming duet Takao invoked with the illusory image of Kazuo Ohno.

When asked why platforms such as 1SA are important, Takao Kawaguchi emphasized that the festival, "brings both domestic and international artists and companies in order to introduce the cutting edge of the contemporary art and performing arts scene around the region. It has been quite exciting to see in Yokohama, works from the Philippines in the last couple of years at TPAM. I hope there will be such exchanges in the coming years."

"1SA: Solo Arts Platform – Manila team was composed of Andrei Nikolai Pamintuan (Festival Director), Jodinand Aguillon (Executive Director), Charissa Pammit (Executive Producer). Festival Staff: James Pe Lim, Gabbi Campomanes, Anissa Aguila, Chino Carlo Aricaya, Mia Fortugaleza, Luis Yatco, and Gab Lauza"

NEXT GEN 2018 - Notes and Highlights from Fellows - Philippines

NEXT GENERATION: PRODUCING PERFORMING ARTS 2018

Next Generation: Producing Performing Arts is a program for young producers, programmers, presenters, curators, dramaturgs and critics from Southeast Asia and Japan. In 2018, the fellows went to the LiveWorks Festival in Sydney, International Dance Festival in Jakarta, Undisclosed Territory 11 in Solo, several spaces and institutions in Yogyakarta, and 2019's TPAM in Yokohama. Below are some highlights from the reports of the fellows from the Philippines.

Watching Rianto's *Medium* was a spiritual experience for me and was definitely a highlight of this trip. It was my first time to encounter the Indonesian artform *lengger*, and listening to Rianto discuss the philosophy behind it and his own relationship with it during the artist talk was a good introduction prior to watching the performance. The music, the movements, the call and response nature of the performance were organically familiar and translated easily into my embodied understanding, even if I can't quite articulate why I like it. All I know is that it made me feel many things—Recognition? Joy? Amazement? Perhaps nostalgia for a shared but lost past? And also pain—it was painful to realize that because of Southeast Asia's colonial and political history, I only know a little bit about my own culture and that of Philippine's neighboring countries, such as Indonesia, and that I know significantly more about Western culture and have grown to revere these foreign forms, even. After the Sydney trip I was determined to change and correct this and am currently finding ways to increase my knowledge about Philippine and Southeast Asian culture."

- **Franchesca Casauay, independent producer**

In conversations from Sydney to Javanese cities, two reliable positions to fiscal capital become apparent, both on opposing ends of the spectrum of having too much and having very little for production...In order to render the value of money in production as both essential and irrelevant, we need to speak, not only about it but to it. The body needs to speak to it. Our lip-service industry that enables funding network to be seemingly smart and empathic must go through a series of renewals. The usual deployment of criticism to institutions has long been ineffective; the renewal must arise from peer-to-peer criticism and feedback. A healthy and progressive professional network must be able to perform a system of criticism that must not mimic any diplomatic habits. The real virtue of diplomacy is critical negotiation: bodies speak with each other with all the risks that these bodies carry for equity and never for accumulation."

- **Renan Laru-an, curator**



There's still a huge gap in the Philippines (and perhaps in other countries as well) between performance artists who come from the visual arts and contemporary performance-makers, theater-makers, and dancers. Is there a way to bridge the gap? Does the gap have to be bridged? Is there a way to have these practices at least connect and communicate and inform one another as practices that at least share the nature of using the body as medium and time and space as elements in composition? What is the role of the dramaturg and the curator in this? Is there a possibility for a performance art dramaturg in the way that there are performing arts curators? What are the limits of these words, "dramaturg," "producer," "curator," "artist," "performer," "choreographer," "actor," and how might we become more aware of these limits so that even as we use the words themselves we do not have to completely *become* only these words?" -**Nessa Roque, actor and dramaturg**

APAF : CREATING ENCOUNTERS AND BUILDING ARTIST COMMUNITIES

By Issa Manalo Lopez

The “Workshop for International Collaboration” platform of the Asian Performing Arts Forum creates a doorway for artists to venture into a shared space where they can showcase their capacity as contemporary performance-makers, comment on issues that they want to address using their art and locate their position within the Asian cultural network.

When I was granted the opportunity to participate as Director for the APAF Workshop, I was truly ecstatic. It was my first time to go to Japan and collaborate with other Asian artists. I saw it as a chance to discover the current pulse of the theatre-making scene in Asia. It's an opportunity to encounter face to face practices that I only read about. It is an honor to have been chosen by APAF, to be the first Filipino female director to bring in her own voice to their platform, an opportunity which is not usually accessible. The concept I brought with me to the workshop included the use of autobiographical work, a current practice I am fine tuning, and the subject of female body politics. Although very eager, there was still trepidation in me because I wasn't sure how the Japanese audience would react. Olive and Jared, my Filipino co-participants, and I did not know what to expect but we leapt into the experience willingly.

In Tokyo Metropolitan Theatre in Ikebukuro, we were immersed in the bustling urban noise, the crosswalks, systematic urban planning, and the cold weather that was far from what we had in Manila. Dragging our suitcases, we were halted by the sights and sounds of a colorful and hilarious outdoor performance of the Caucasian Chalk Circle in Nihongo filling the air with a celebratory mood. We met other participants trickling in from their flights and had our first taste of sushi in Japan with a Malaysian Actor-Director and a Thai Filmmaker-dancer. Everyone had high spirits.

We experienced the same excitement on the day all participants were gathered to meet APAF Artistic Director Junnosuke Tada. It was his first year and he set the tone by introducing the theme “Violent” to us. The nuance of

understanding the difference of “Violent” and “Violence” born out of the Japanese sense of the word laid out the challenge for us participants – Violent being in a state of Violence rather than the act. This chasm between these two definitions became the space for our exploration. We were encouraged to do go out of our comfort zones, interrogate the idea of “Violent” innovatively outside of its usual portrayal onstage. We were tasked to sense an emerging work out of this intercultural environment.

After, all the participants introduced their work and we saw the range of vocabulary and possibilities that we could play with to create a seed piece- a proposition for the development of a full length work the following year. APAF provides a unique framework because it gathers up and coming Asian artists to collaborate in creating artistic provocations on issues we confront globally. These conditions are valuable because it allows a more nuanced and inclusive understanding born out of diverse perspectives.

This was evident in our workshop sessions which transpired in the Shizuoka Performing Arts Center. It was the perfect place to incubate our works - waking up to the sight of Mt. Fuji, hearing birds from the nearby sanctuary, the beautiful rehearsal spaces - the quiet hexagon room that allowed us to share personal stories and be vulnerable, the box theatre with a linoleum dance floor inspired improvisation and play, and the elegant oval room with a high ceiling that became the perfect frame for blocking and performance. The environment eased us into developing openness towards our collaborators.

As participant, I found it so easy to just share what it's like for me to live in the Philippines because the others were eager to learn about local conditions in Manila. Despite this ease, I was also confronted by the challenge of introducing the theme of feminism and gender to people who may not be all open to undertaking such a theme. And so I realized the complications of negotiating conditions set by diversity and the differences

PARTICIPANTS' REPORT

in language and beliefs. Each member found their own way of articulating their thoughts through images and translations. Our translator, Kanoko, who was the key to the smooth facilitation of our exchanges guided us in learning how to work with her. Language is integral in cultural exchanges and the key to a harmonious collaboration. Non-verbal cues and behavior mattered as well. I discovered that "Pakikiramdam", sensing and responding, was not just a Filipino trait but also a universal language that had a counterpart in other cultures.

When my group and I were investigating the subject of the "Female Body as a Site of Violent" it was this skill of listening to each other that helped us bring together our varying viewpoints about the subject; all nuanced by our religion, gender, social and economic background, quirks, and personal histories. Here I encountered empathy. It took the whole length of the workshop to find a way to manage exchanges in different situations, leveling expectations and finding the direction of the work. And that dynamism fostered a potent environment for exciting collaboration - all new to us, all exciting.

APAF indeed became platform that allowed an exchanges that can facilitate growth in the individual processes of each participant. It created a common performance language that allowed participants to address issues in a way that only theatre can.

The three teams led by three directors of varying practices all felt a sense of community despite being divided. Participants and directors engaged in constructive feedback and idea building regarding the works they were brewing. Collaboration even continued through banter and throwing ideas back and forth during smoking breaks, over meals in the common dining area and even celebratory drinking



Isssa Manalo Lopez (in red) and her team

after rehearsals. The community became a support system where you could ask for help, air out difficulties, help spark inspiration, and work out challenges encountered.

In our group we shared personal narratives and memories to try to understand what Violent was in relation to the "Woman". My team members led exercises and warm ups that we thoroughly enjoyed. It introduced us to new ways of using our bodies, minds and voices. This encounter with the unfamiliar made me look at how I approach theatre-making in a different light. I learned from the expertise and processes of each collaborator. The APAF experience taught me how to navigate through the traps and breakthroughs of engaging with the creative processes of co-makers.

The highly talented artists I worked with were straightforward and generous and so intersections both comforting and provoking were present in our rehearsal space. This engendering of freedom to express, where anyone can address their difficulties and their "Aha!" moments, was so strong in our team. Allowing these oppositions to emerge from our work opens up the Japanese audience to a multi-vocal performance.

When we went back to Tokyo Metropolitan Theatre for the showcase, I was amazed at the works of all three teams. All were very different in nature, form and content - Detarame, Physical theatre and the interrogation of Power play from the group of Japanese Tomohiko Kyouhoku and a fantastical image bending and dark re-imagining of the fairytale Cinderella from the group of Indonesian Dendi Madiya.

The three seed-piece performances were so eclectic, tones of comedy-fantasy-brutality were all presented along side each other - all totally different in form and flavor. But all the

participants were able to relate to each other's work. We all arrived at finding familiarity with the unfamiliar.

After the APAF experience, I arrived in Manila changed. I am more open to collaborator's ideas and still know how to respect the integrity of my vision. After I was introduced to Dendi-san's dramaturgical work and Tomo-san's spontaneous devising, I saw new ways of structuring dramatic images and discovered the ease of spontaneous choreography. When I create I know see my work in the context of a wider geography and that it is important to continue collaborating with other Asian communities.

APAF is valuable and indispensable in the advancement of theatre-making in Asia because it brings down barriers of cultural individualism, encourages artists to see that they are not alone and creates a network of support and exchange through deep and continuing relationships that promise future collaborations.



PARTICIPANT'S REPORT

Talk with Muslims (TAMU) Series, organized by the Japan Foundation Asia Center, invites participants from Southeast Asia to go to Japan and experience Japanese culture, exchange views with Japanese university students on Islam and religious views with the Japanese youth. Ms. Monaliza Adam-Mangelen was invited to participate in the TAMU in Japan last November 4-13, 2018. Coming back to the Philippines, she shared with us her insights from her experiences.

THE SIMILARITIES OF JAPANESE SOCIETY AND ISLAMIC TEACHINGS

by **Monaliza Adam-Mangelen**

I was privileged to be chosen as one of the ten delegates of TAMU organized by the Japan Foundation-Asia Center. I feel honored because I know that the program was giving me the chance to be an agent and catalyst for peace by means of promoting awareness about my beautiful faith, Islam.

The program tendered us very significant learnings and deeper understanding of the Japanese people, society and culture. Reflecting back, Japanese Society and Islamic teachings have a lot in common. Here are a few of the things I've listed:

Cleanliness. The high degree of cleanliness is not just a systematic process in Japan, but a part of the Japanese's spirituality because it is said that the *Kami* (Gods) hate dirty environments. In Islam, our Prophet Muhammad always emphasizes that cleanliness and purity is half of our faith.

Honesty. We learned about Yoshida Shoin's honesty when he knew that there was a big threat in society he spoke about it publicly even if it was against his own samurai code, in the end, all his efforts are said to have led to Japan's modernization age. In Islam, there is a *hadith* (prophet's saying) that the greatest *Jihad* (sacrifice) is to speak against any oppression and tyranny.

Self-discipline. Japanese people practice a high level of discipline by means of observing time, punctuality, and details of their everyday engagements. Fasting in Islam is a form of practicing self-discipline, not just refraining from eating and drinking, but also from doing bad deeds.

Importance of Education. It was impressive to know how the class we visited was interested in Islam and Muslim culture. Indeed, with proper education, we can help shape the minds of our learners by giving them better views of our diverse society. In Islam, the first verse of our Qur'an is to read, and "to seek knowledge from our cradle to our grave". It emphasizes the importance of learning as we continue our journey in this life.



Dynamics of syncretism. It was interesting to know that most Japanese follow a mixture of Shintoism, Buddhism, and Christianity. Currently, there is an increase of Muslims in Japan through the second generation of Muslim Japanese. There is great emphasis on the importance of respect to other religion in Islam. Many historical narratives say that Muslims in the old times tried to help Christians and Jews from persecution.

The TAMU program played a vital role in spreading a good impression of Islam to Japanese society. It is noteworthy that the program invited Muslims from neighboring countries to share what Islam means and how we can be of help to end all negative information about our religion.

The program provides an experience that can greatly help different people to understand each other, respect differences and appreciate similarities. Through this, we can work to build a better place for the future where there is no misunderstanding that can lead to discrimination and hatred towards others on the basis of their culture or religion.

ACTIVITY REPORT

JAPAN FOUNDATION JSA-ASEAN 2018

December 6-7, 2018

Jakarta, Indonesia

The Japan Foundation selected 20 participants from the Philippines for Japan Foundation JSA-ASEAN in Indonesia 2018 travel grant. The grant is for the Japanese studies scholars in the Philippines who have a master's degree or higher to attend the AAS-in-ASIA Conference in Jakarta held last December 2018. The grant program hopes to see stronger working relationship cultivated among Japan scholars in Asia, North America, and Japan. Selected applicants were carefully selected from various disciplines in humanities and social sciences.



JSA-Ascan in Jakarta screengrab from Ms. Fujita Shion FB

THE BREATHING OF MAPS: Transformations of the Geo-Body Exhibition

December 15, 2018 – March 3, 2019

The Yamaguchi Center for Arts and Media (YCAM), Japan

The Japan Foundation Asia Center and The Yamaguchi Center for Arts and Media [YCAM] will present "The Breathing of Maps," an exhibition developed in collaboration with Malaysia-based director and researcher Mark Teh as an co-curator, as part of the Condition Report Project. Accompanying the exhibition are related artworks, performances, and lectures by artists and scholars from Southeast Asia and Japan based on their own unique research into the history, culture, politics, economics, folkways, and other social phenomena of their respective countries. Featured in the exhibit is Filipino visual and performance artist Carlos Celdran, with a screening of his Intramuros Performance Tour 'Walk This Way'



AWAKENINGS EXHIBITION: Art in Society in Asia 1960s-1990s

October 10 – December 24, 2018

The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo,
National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art,
Korea and the National Gallery Singapore

This exhibition focuses on the period from the 1960s to the 1990s, the dawning of contemporary art in Asian countries. It gathers together 140 provocative, experimental works produced in the turbulent period from more than ten regions and countries, and examines the similarities and differences between them. As the culmination of a five-year joint project by three national museums in Japan, Korea and Singapore and the Japan Foundation Asia Center.

JAPAN MOVIE FEST FREE SCREENING

November 19 - December 1, 2018

Selected Robinsons Movieworld Theater

The Japan Foundation, Manila in partnership with Robinsons Movieworld presented free screenings of award-winning Japanese historical, drama, feature and animated films for the first-time at selected Robinsons Movieworld theaters, namely Metro East, Gen Trias, Starmills, and Pavia. The film showing was a joint project also with Film Development Council of the Philippines. Films lined-up included the following: *A Tale of Samurai Cooking – A True Love Story*, *Thermae Romae*, *Nobody to Watch Over Me*, *Mameshiba* and animated film *Pop in Q*.



ASIAN STUDENT PACKAGE (ASPaC)



DESIGN LECTURE AND WORKSHOP

October 24, 2018

University of the Philippines – College of Fine Arts (UP CFA)

ASPaC DESIGN COMPETITION 2018

December 2-5, 2018

GOOD DESIGN Marunouchi, Japan

The Japan Foundation, Asia Students Package Design Competition (ASPaC) Association, and Japan Package Design Association (JPDA) organized the Package Design Lecture and Workshop for the first time in the Philippines. The lecture and workshop gathered 80 of the best Fine Arts students to partake in the said event. Mr. Sasada Fumi's lecture about the "Creation of Brand Power through Package Design" was both insightful as it was engaging since the presentation was interactive that both students and educators actively participated. After the lecture was the Package Design Workshop wherein the students formed into groups and proposed a new package design. Ms. Reina Biaca and Ms. Nina Morales, accompanied by UPCFA Interior Design Program Head Ms. Nina Constantino, were chosen to go to Japan to compete at the ASPaC Design Competition 2018. They won the Japan Foundation Award and Silver Award respectively.



L-R: Mr. Sasada Fumi (CEO, Bravis), Ms. Nina Constantino (UP CFA), Mr. Nina Morales (UP CFA), Ms. Reina Biaca (UP CFA), Dan Matutina (Founding Partner, Plus61 Design Co.)

UPCOMING EVENTS

Art Archive 02

TBC Art Archive 02 is the second volume of a series published by The Japan Foundation, Manila dedicated to bring to view the present trends and concerns of contemporary art in the country. The book introduces essays from 12 notable individuals setting forth a myriad of perspectives on current Philippine film and literature.

Art Archive 02 will be available for free digital download soon on our website (www.jfmo.org.ph). Please follow facebook.com/jfmanila for more updates.



Nihongo Fiesta 2019

February 23, 2019
Shangri-La Plaza Mall, EDSA,
Mandaluyong City

The Japan Foundation, Manila (JFM) in pursuit of its objective of promoting cultural exchange through Japanese Language Education in the Philippines, announces the Nihongo Speech Contest 2019 to be held on Saturday, February 23, 2019. The speech contest, now in its 46th year, is one of the major events of the 14th Nihongo Fiesta which will feature the Nihongo Quiz Bee, film showings, and live performances.

Japanese Studies Seminar "Special Seminar on Philippine – Japan Relations"

March 08, 2019
PJL Conference Room,
14/F Henry Sy Sr. Hall,
De La Salle University

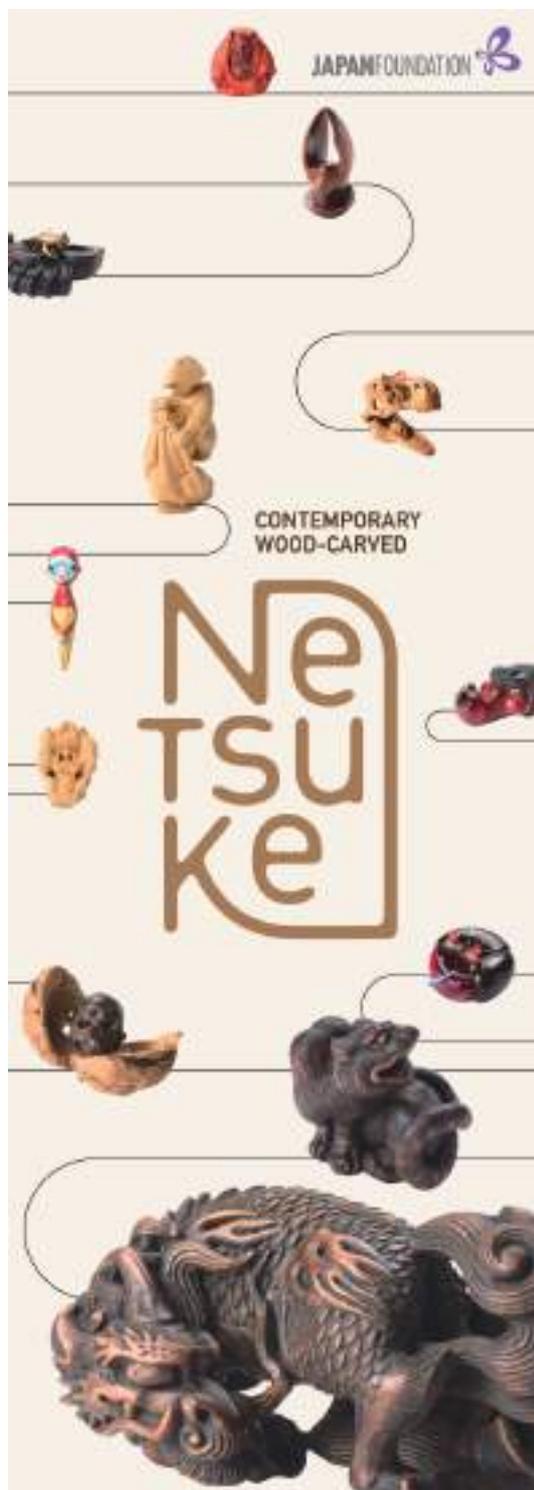
The Japan Foundation, Manila and De La Salle University invite students and scholars to attend the Japanese Studies Seminar, with lectures concerning issues on security, migration, labor, etc. in Japan.

... and Action! Asia #5: Exchange Program for Students in Film Studies

March 1- 14, 2019
Jakarta, Indonesia

... and Action! Asia is an exchange program which provides opportunities for students in film studies and young filmmakers to interact and work together with their foreign counterparts. Organized by the Japan Foundation Asia Center and Jakarta Institute of the Arts, the fifth edition of *... and Action! Asia* will be held in Jakarta, Indonesia in March, with participation of 21 students and 8 instructors from Japan, Indonesia and other ASEAN countries such as the Philippines, Myanmar and Vietnam (The University of the Philippines was selected to represent the country). During the program, the participants are going to co-produce and screen 4 short-films based on film plots that they have submitted, while attending lectures and discussion on methods of filmmaking and critical analysis of films and visiting film-related institutions in Indonesia.

UPCOMING EVENTS



A Working Title Workshop 2018-2019: Training and Development Program for Film Curators and Screening Professionals

March 19 – March 2, 2019

UP Film Institute, Quezon City and Film
Development Council of the Philippines

A Working Title aims to nurture up-and-coming film curators and screening professionals, and foster networks among young film curators from Japan and Southeast Asia. Young film programmers and curators from Japan, Philippines, Indonesia, and Malaysia will collaboratively develop film screening programs and show them in Tokyo and Manila under the mentorship of film professionals. While their Tokyo session was already held in August 2018, Manila session will be held in this coming March at the University of the Philippines Film Institute (UPFI) and Film Development Council of the Philippines (FDCP). The 4-day program will include various activities such as screenings of films that the participants have curated, master class and lectures, and study tour. Most of the program activities will be open to the general public. The schedule is available at the back cover of this issue.

Contemporary Wood-carved Netsuke Exhibition

May - July 2019

Venue to be announced

This traveling exhibition showcases contemporary netsuke carved of wood by living netsuke carvers in Japan, plus netsuke created by contemporary artists such as Izumi Kato. It also includes wooden netsuke that visitors may touch. Through this exhibition, visitors will appreciate the sophisticated skills and playful minds behind contemporary netsuke as well as its formal beauty and contemporaneity.

Please note that event dates and details are subject to change.
Visit [facebook.com/jfmanila](https://www.facebook.com/jfmanila) and <http://www.jfmo.org.ph> for updates.

GRANTS

The Japan Foundation, Manila locally offers grant programs to support projects which promote, introduce and deepen understanding of Japan in the Philippines, and projects which encourage and enhance cultural exchange and collaboration in Asia.

QCinema International Film Festival 2018

October 21-30, 2018

Trinoma, Gateway, Robinson Galleria and UP Town Center, Quezon City

The QCinema Film Festival is an endeavor of the Quezon City Government, through the Quezon City Film Development Commission (QCFDC), to actively engage the independent film scene. The Japan Foundation, Manila supported the film festival by bringing in Director Keisuke Yoshida of the film "COME ON IRENE" featuring Yusuke Iseya, Ken Yasuda, and Filipina actress Nats Sityo. The film is about a 42-year old loser Iwao Shishido screws up his one shot at love, and leaves home to go to the Philippines to join a tour and possibly find a bride.



The Dressing Room

November 7-25, 2018

Wilfredo Ma. Guerrero Theater, UP Diliman, Quezon City

For 43 seasons, the official theatre company of the Philippines' premier State University, Dulaang UP, has been engaging and acquiring inspirations from the Japanese culture and theater. One is the staging of Sakurahime of the Princess of the Cherry Blossoms, based on the conventions of Noh Theater, written and directed by Dr. Anton Juan during its 20th season.

45th PPO Anniversary Concert

November 15, 2018

Manila Cathedral, Intramuros, Manila

The Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra celebrates its 45th anniversary with a concert, featuring famous Japanese violinist-conductor Ryu Goto at the historic Manila Cathedral in Intramuros. Ryu performed and conducted Antonio Vivaldi's The Four Seasons and Antonin Dvorak's Symphony No. 8, Op. 88, in G Major. The concert is also in celebration of the 60th anniversary of Manila Cathedral.

Acid Mothers Temple - Live in Manila

November 26-27, 2018

Club XX XX, La Fuerza Plaza, 2241 Chino Roces Ave., Makati City

The event aimed to showcase the live musical performance of Japanese band Acid Mothers Temple and present it to the Philippine audience for the first time in global and local music history. With Acid Mothers Temple's wide range of influences and eclectic approaches to music-making which has spanned over twenty (20) years, the event also aims to bring together audiences from different age groups and various communities such as musicians from experimental electronica, jazz, rock, and folk genres.

ANIMAHENASYON 2018: 12th Philippine Animation Festival

November 9, 2018
SM Aura, Taguig City

ANIMAHENASYON 2018 : 12th Philippine Animation Festival was a 2- day festival with a conference, animation film screenings for competition and exhibition from local & foreign animators, creators & producers. Its main objective was to create awareness and appreciation of Japanese animation film, the way it was created and produced as well as understand the discipline, process, techniques and skills in the production of the film.

The Animation Council of the Philippines (ACPI) screened the film, "MAZINGER Z: INFINITY" twice at SM Aura. ACPI selected this famous animated Japanese film that features advance animation production, CGI and special effects in-line with their main objectives for this year festival.



Japanese Studies Conference at DLSU

December 6-8, 2018
Br. Andrew Gonzalez Hall, De La Salle
University, Manila

A three-day international conference titled "State, Market and Civil Society in East Asia: Competitive Control and Distributional Effects" was organized by University of Auckland at De La Salle University, Manila.





Viva Excon Capiz 2018

November 8, 2018 – January 31, 2019
Roxas City, Capiz, Visayas

This year's VIVA EXCON, or the Visayas Islands Visual Arts Exhibition and Conference, also known as the longest-running biennale in the Philippines, was held in Roxas city in Capiz province for the first time. Viva Excon was composed of art exhibitions as well as 3-day conference. The central part of the small, rural city of Roxas was turned into a festive art space where a variety of installations and artworks were exhibited and performances were conducted, not only inside civic center and museum but also in outdoor spaces such as plaza, street and building façade, etc. The conference was also well visited, providing a significant venue for interaction between local artists and cultural workers from the Visayas region as well as other parts of the country and abroad.



ANNOUNCEMENT

THE JAPAN FOUNDATION ACCEPTS GRANT APPLICATIONS

Fiscal Year July 2019 - March 2020

The JFM, in its continuing endeavor to promote international cultural exchange and mutual understanding, is accepting grant applications in four major categories: 1) Arts and Cultural Exchange; 2) Japanese-Language Education Overseas; 3) Japanese Studies and Intellectual Exchange; and 4) Strengthening Cultural Exchange in Asia. Local grants and small-support programs are also open for applications all year round. For more information, please visit us at www.jfmo.org.ph/grants

WORKING TITLE

WORKSHOP 2018-2019:

Training and Development Program for Film Curators and Screening Professionals

Admission is free

SCHEDULE*

MARCH 19, 2019 (TUES)

4:30 - 7:00 pm

Cinema Centenario,

95 Maginhawa Street, Diliman, Quezon City

SCREENING & Director's Talk

Filipino Experimental showcase

MARCH 20, 2019 (WED)

4:00 - 6:00 pm

Film Development Council of the Philippines (FDCP)

855 T M Kalaw St, Ermita, Manila

Roundtable session

Discussion on Micro-cinema, Cineclub & Alternative screening
Including presentation by Elise Shick Chong (Malaysia,
CINEPHILIA, NEXT NEW WAVE) & Alexander Mathius
(Indonesia, Kinosaurs)

MARCH 21, 2019 (THURS)

11:00 am - 12:30 pm

Masterclass Talk Session

lecture by Ed Lejano (Festival Director, QCinema International
Film Festival) & Chris Fujiwara (Film critic)

2:00 - 3:30 pm

Japanese Experimental Showcase

Screening & Lecture by Koyo Yamashita
(Film Programmer, Image Forum Festival)

4:00 pm - **"Bagahe"** (Philippines, 90min)

7:30 pm - **"27 Steps of May"** (Indonesia, 110min)

MARCH 22, 2019 (FRI)

11:00 am - **"15 Malaysia"** (Malaysia, 80min)

2:00 pm - **"Ten Years Thailand"** (Thailand, 95min)

4:00 pm - **"5 to 9"** (Japan-Singapore-China-Thailand, 90min)

5:40 - 6:30 pm - **Symposium**

7:30 pm - **"Bangkok Nites"**

(Japan-Thailand-Laos-France, 183min)

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Manila Notes

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